

1                               A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to home book delivery for elementary  
3       students; providing legislative findings; creating s.  
4       1003.485 F.S.; establishing the New Worlds Reading  
5       Initiative under the Department of Education;  
6       providing definitions; providing duties of the  
7       administrator; requiring the administrator, in  
8       consultation with a specified entity, to develop a  
9       selection of books; requiring the administrator to  
10      coordinate monthly book distribution to certain  
11      students; requiring the administrator to assist with  
12      local implementation of the initiative; requiring the  
13      administrator to maintain a clearinghouse of specified  
14      information; requiring the administrator to develop  
15      and disseminate certain training materials by  
16      specified means; establishing reporting requirements;  
17      establishing student eligibility requirements;  
18      requiring school districts to notify parents of  
19      eligible students; requiring school districts to  
20      coordinate with the administrator to initiate book  
21      delivery; providing requirements for book delivery;  
22      requiring that students be offered certain options  
23      relating to books; specifying when student eligibility  
24      ends; requiring school districts raise awareness of  
25      the initiative; requiring that books be delivered at

no cost to families; authorizing the Department of Education to contract with a third-party entity; providing requirements for such third-party entity; amending s. 1008.25, F.S.; requiring that a certain notification include information about the initiative; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. The Legislature finds that the ability to read is fundamental to a productive, fulfilling, culturally rewarding, and civically engaged life. Furthermore, a literacy-rich home environment helps develop reading and writing skills in young learners to prepare them for future academic and career success. Research shows that students who read more perform better academically than those who do not. Unfortunately, statistics show students who have fewer books and literacy-based interactions at home than their peers have lower educational attainment and lifetime income-earning potential. Programs that deliver books directly to students' homes and support engagement in reading enable parents to develop their child's reading skills and enjoyment of reading and foster improved outcomes for students.

Section 2. Section 1003.485, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1003.485 The New Worlds Reading Initiative.—

51       (1) The New Worlds Reading Initiative is established under  
52 the Department of Education to improve literacy skills and  
53 instill a love of reading by providing high-quality, free books  
54 to students in kindergarten through grade 5 who are reading  
55 below grade level.

56       (2) DEFINITIONS.- As used in this section the term:

57       (a) "Administrator" means the Department of Education or a  
58 third-party entity contracted to administer the initiative.

59       (b) "Initiative" means the New Worlds Reading Initiative.

60       (3) The administrator shall:

61       (a) Develop, in consultation with the Just Read, Florida!  
62 Office under s. 1001.215, a selection of high-quality books  
63 encompassing diverse subjects and genres for each grade level to  
64 be mailed to students in the initiative.

65       (b) Facilitate the distribution of books as provided in  
66 paragraph (5)(c) either directly or through an agreement with a  
67 book distribution company.

68       (c) Assist local implementation of the initiative by:

69       1. Providing assistance to local communities to raise  
70 awareness of the initiative, including through the use of  
71 partnerships between public libraries and school districts to  
72 implement events such as family library nights, library card  
73 drives, summer access and activities, and other activities  
74 designed to increase family engagement and instill a love of  
75 reading in students.

76        2. Developing and providing marketing materials to school  
77        districts and any partnering nonprofit organizations to assist  
78        with public awareness campaigns.

79        (d) Maintain a clearinghouse for information on national,  
80        state, and local nonprofit organizations that support efforts to  
81        provide books to children.

82        (e) Develop training materials for parents of students in  
83        the initiative, including brief video training modules, which  
84        engage families in reading and assist with improving student  
85        literacy skills. The administrator shall periodically send, via  
86        text message and e-mail, tips for facilitating reading at home  
87        and hyperlinks to the video training modules.

88  
89        Beginning September 30, 2022, and annually thereafter, the  
90        Department of Education shall report to the President of the  
91        Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the  
92        Commissioner of Education the number of students participating  
93        in the initiative in each school district and the academic  
94        achievement and learning gains, as applicable, of participating  
95        students based on data provided by school districts as permitted  
96        under s. 1002.22. The department shall establish a date by which  
97        each school district must annually provide the data necessary to  
98        complete the report.

99        (4) Each school district shall participate in the  
100       initiative by partnering with local nonprofit organizations,

101 raising awareness of the initiative using marketing materials  
102 developed by the administrator, coordinating book delivery, and  
103 identifying students and notifying parents pursuant to  
104 subsection (5).

105 (5) (a) A student in kindergarten through grade 5 must be  
106 provided books through the initiative if the student has a  
107 substantial reading deficiency identified under s. 1008.25(5) (a)  
108 or scored below a Level 3 on the preceding year's statewide,  
109 standardized English Language Arts assessment under s. 1008.22.

110 (b) Each school district shall notify the parent of a  
111 student who meets the criteria under paragraph (a) that the  
112 student is eligible to receive books at no cost through the New  
113 Worlds Reading Initiative and provide the parent with the  
114 application form developed by the administrator, which must  
115 allow for the selection of specific book topics or genres for  
116 the student.

117 (c) Once an eligible student is identified, the school  
118 district shall coordinate with the administrator to initiate  
119 book delivery on a monthly basis during the school year, which  
120 must begin no later than October and continue through at least  
121 June.

122 (d) At the beginning of each school year, students must be  
123 provided options for specific book topics or genres in order to  
124 maximize student interest in reading.

125 (e) A student's eligibility for the initiative continues

126 until promotion to grade 6 or until the student's parent opts  
127 out of the initiative.

128 (6) School districts and partnering nonprofit organizations  
129 shall raise awareness of the initiative, including information  
130 on eligibility and video training modules under paragraph  
131 (3)(e), through, at least, the following:

132 (a) The student handbook and the read-at-home plan under  
133 s. 1008.25(5)(c).

134 (b) A parent or curriculum night or separate initiative  
135 awareness event at each elementary school.

136 (c) Partnering with the county library to host awareness  
137 events, which should coincide with other initiatives such as  
138 library card drives and other family engagement programming.

139 (7) Books must be provided under this section at no cost to  
140 families.

141 (8) If the department contracts with a third-party entity  
142 to act as administrator, the entity must be capable of  
143 coordinating statewide marketing, dissemination of books, and  
144 development of video training modules, as well as completing all  
145 other duties of the administrator.

146 Section 3. Paragraph (c) of subsection (5) of section  
147 1008.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

148 1008.25 Public school student progression; student  
149 support; reporting requirements.—

150 (5) READING DEFICIENCY AND PARENTAL NOTIFICATION.—

151           (c) The parent of any student who exhibits a substantial  
152 deficiency in reading, as described in paragraph (a), must be  
153 notified in writing of the following:

154           1. That his or her child has been identified as having a  
155 substantial deficiency in reading, including a description and  
156 explanation, in terms understandable to the parent, of the exact  
157 nature of the student's difficulty in learning and lack of  
158 achievement in reading.

159           2. A description of the current services that are provided  
160 to the child.

161           3. A description of the proposed intensive interventions  
162 and supports that will be provided to the child that are  
163 designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency.

164           4. That if the child's reading deficiency is not  
165 remediated by the end of grade 3, the child must be retained  
166 unless he or she is exempt from mandatory retention for good  
167 cause.

168           5. Strategies, including multisensory strategies, through  
169 a read-at-home plan the parent can use in helping his or her  
170 child succeed in reading.

171           6. That the statewide, standardized English Language Arts  
172 assessment is not the sole determiner of promotion and that  
173 additional evaluations, portfolio reviews, and assessments are  
174 available to the child to assist parents and the school district  
175 in knowing when a child is reading at or above grade level and

PCS for HB 3

ORIGINAL

2021

ready for grade promotion.

7. The district's specific criteria and policies for a portfolio as provided in subparagraph (6)(b)4. and the evidence required for a student to demonstrate mastery of Florida's academic standards for English Language Arts. A parent of a student in grade 3 who is identified anytime during the year as being at risk of retention may request that the school immediately begin collecting evidence for a portfolio.

8. The district's specific criteria and policies for midyear promotion. Midyear promotion means promotion of a retained student at any time during the year of retention once the student has demonstrated ability to read at grade level.

9. Information about the student's eligibility for the New Worlds Reading Initiative under s. 1003.485 and information on parent training modules and other reading engagement resources available through the initiative.

Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming law.